

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Medicine Point Lookout
Other names/site number: 24RA0134
Name of related multiple property listing:
L-4 Fire Lookouts in the USFS Northern Region (Region 1), 1932-1967

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: _____
City or town: Darby State: Montana County: Ravalli
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☒

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local
Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☐
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☒

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government
Other: fire lookout

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: hotel (USFS cabin rental)

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: "Readicut" L-4 Lookout House

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation:

Walls: WOOD / Weatherboard; GLASS

Roof: WOOD / Shingle

Other: WOOD / Log (tower) CONCRETE (tower footings)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Medicine Point Lookout is an excellent example of the 1931-pattern L-4 Lookout House, originally designed by Clyde Fickes. It is located atop Medicine Point (elevation 8,405 ft), the high point in a north-south trending ridge system that overlooks the West Fork of the Bitterroot River and its tributary streams to the west, and the East Fork of the Bitterroot River and its tributary streams to the east. The only access to the lookout is from a four-mile long pack trail. The lookout structure sits atop a small talus outcrop, surrounded on the west, south, and east sides by low growing vegetation consisting of grasses and forbs. The ridgetop north of the lookout contains an open stand of whitebark pine, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir. Most of the whitebark pine is dead. A fire in 2000 burned through the area, but spared the lookout.

Narrative Description

Medicine Point Lookout (contributing building): The Medicine Point Lookout is a 14-foot by 14-foot wood frame lookout cab with a pyramidal roof built atop a 10-foot high log tower.¹ Simple drop wood siding covers the lower portion of the exterior walls, and the roof is covered with sawn cedar shingles with metal ridge caps. A metal stove pipe extends above the east slope of the roof at its north end. The entry into the lookout house is located at the east end of the south wall, and contains its original six-light wood door. Four nine-light windows are located in the wall west of the entry. The remaining three walls each contain five, nine-light, wood windows, two of which slide sideways allowing ventilation. Each of the lookout cab's four walls has two top-hinged shutters; when open, the shutter struts are affixed to the bottom rail of the catwalk railing. The building retains its lightning protection.

¹ The walls of the lookout cab are not aligned along cardinal directions, but are slightly askew.

Medicine Point Lookout

Ravalli County, Montana

Name of Property

County and State

The four legs of the cross-braced log tower are supported by cast-in-place battered concrete footings. A single-flight stairway leads from the northeast corner of the tower base to the catwalk. The stair stringers and treads are made with milled lumber. A handrail on the outside edge of the stairway has been fashioned by affixing a small pole to the base of the lookout cab at one end and the other to a vertical post. A small wooden storage box is suspended from the base of the lookout cab adjacent to the stair. It can be accessed from the top of the stair through a hinged screened cover.

In the one-room interior, the original maple floor is intact and in fair condition. The interior is fitted with a wood stand that supports an Osborne fire finder, a small wood-burning stove, a platform bed with drawers beneath for storage, a small table, and a storage bench.

Outhouse (noncontributing building): The recently-constructed outhouse is located about 185 feet north of the lookout. This one-story front-gable building measures 3.5 feet by 4 feet. It sits on a board foundation, and stones are piled around its base. The exterior walls are covered with simple drop wood siding with vertical corner board trim. Wood shingles cover the roof. The front (north) wall has a two-panel wood door.

Antenna pole (noncontributing structure): A recently-erected peeled pole is located adjacent to the northeast corner of the lookout. Antennae are affixed to the pole.

Hitching rail (noncontributing structure): A metal hitching rail, consisting of square uprights with two cylindrical cross bars is located about 105 feet north of the northwest corner of the lookout building, at the edge of the forested area.

Integrity

Medicine Point Lookout retains all seven aspects of historical integrity. The lookout is in its original location, in a remote area only accessible by trail. Its remoteness in turn contributes to its exceptional integrity of setting, feeling and association. The lookout cab and tower retain integrity of materials, workmanship and design. In addition to the lookout, the site area contains a wood frame outhouse, which is in good condition, a modern antenna pole, and a pipe metal hitching rail. A flagpole noted in the 1982 Cultural Site Record form has been removed. Also noted in the 1982 Cultural Site Record form but also missing are the orange painted rocks that were arranged to spell MED PT—presumably so that the lookout could be identified from the air. The lookout stands as an example of the once-common 1931-pattern L-4 Lookouts included in the Bitterroot National Forest's fire detection system.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Politics / Government

Conservation

Engineering

Architecture

Medicine Point Lookout

Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana

County and State

Period of Significance

1939- 1967

Significant Dates

1939 (year built)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Clyde Fickes (designer)

CCC crew (builder)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Medicine Point Lookout is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C, at the local and state level of significance. Under Criterion A, it is significantly associated with the US Forest Service's early fire detection program, which relied on a series of fixed lookout points from which to locate forest fires. Under Criterion C, Medicine Point Lookout is an excellent example of a 1931-pattern L-4 Lookout House.

Medicine Point Lookout meets the Registration Requirements set forth in the *L-4 Fire Lookouts in the USFS Northern Region (Region 1)*, *1932-1967 Multiple Property Document* and the associated contexts *The Role of the L-4 Lookout House in the Development of the US Forest Service Region 1's Fire Detection System* and *L-4 Lookouts on the Bitterroot National Forest*. The period of significance for the Medicine Point Lookout is 1939-1967, within the defined period of significance of the MPD cover form, 1932-1967. The Bitterroot National Forest added Medicine Point Lookout to its fixed point fire detection system in 1939, the beginning of the period of significance, and used it through 1967, the end of the historical period as defined in the MPD cover form. It is currently used as a cabin rental.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The earliest reference to Medicine Point as a place for fixed fire detection comes from a 1933 edition of the Bitterroot National Forest map with hand-written notations for the 1936 fire season. Medicine Point is shown as one of seven lookout points within the old East Fork District.² The six other points included: Sula Peak, Hill Top, McCart, Clifford Ridge (a.k.a. Clifford Peak), Fish Lake, and another located just northwest of the East Fork Ranger Station, near present day Teepee Point.³ Medicine Point, Sula Peak, Hill Top, and McCart were designated “minimum season,” lookouts. Fish Lake and Clifford Ridge represented the two “average season” lookouts, while the unnamed lookout just north of the ranger station was designated an “emergency” lookout point.⁴ With the possible exception of the establishment of temporary tent camps, none of the lookout points in the East Fork District had been improved.

When Elers Koch conducted an inspection of the Bitterroot Forest in 1937, he found nine established lookout points on the East Fork District, seven regular (primary) lookout points and two secondary (emergency) points.⁵ In order to catch up with the other forests in the region, Regional Forester Evan Kelley, suggested that Forest Supervisor Brandborg make use of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crews to erect the L-4 kits.⁶ Apparently, Brandborg agreed with Kelley’s suggestion, as two years later, CCC crews assisted in the construction of a 1931-pattern L-4 lookout atop Medicine Point.

While the forest abandoned many of its stationary lookout points after the adoption of air patrols, on the Sula District, Medicine Point and its neighbor, Sula Peak Lookout (located just 5.5 miles north), continued to be manned on a regular basis. This appears to have been due largely to limits to funding air patrols. In 1954, the forest’s regular flights could cover the remote, deeply incised canyons of the Idaho side of the forest (mostly the Moose Creek and Magruder areas of the West Fork District), “time and gas,” prevented the flight from including the Sula District, from Medicine Point eastward to the forest boundary on the Pintler divide. Instead Sula Peak and Medicine Point lookouts provided most of the fire detection on the district: Sula Peak covered the “man caused fire area very well,” including all of the district’s road and picnic areas, plus the Highway 93 corridor. Medicine Point had the only FM relay station on the district, allowing it to communicate with the patrol plane and to relay messages for the adjacent West

² Note that the East Fork District was renamed the Sula District in the 1940s.

³ Comparison of a 1933 base map of the Bitterroot National Forest with the 2015 edition map of the forest indicates that the unnamed lookout was located in the vicinity of the modern Teepee Point Lookout, built in 1984. 1933 Bitterroot National Forest Map, with handwritten notations for 1936 season. Folder: F-Plans Presuppression Permanent 1930-1947, Box 21, RG 95, Records of the Bitterroot National Forest, Forest Supervisors Records, Alpha Files, E- Improvements, National Archives and Records Administration, Seattle (Hereinafter NARA Seattle).

⁴ 1933 Bitterroot National Forest Map, with handwritten notations for 1936 season. Folder: F-Plans Presuppression Permanent 1930-1947, Box 21, RG 95, Records of the Bitterroot National Forest, Forest Supervisors Records, Alpha Files, E- mprovements, National Archives and Records Administration, Seattle (Hereinafter NARA Seattle).

⁵ Elers Koch, Assistant Regional Forester, “August 19, 1937 Memorandum for Supervisor and Regional Office D (s) Supervision – Bitterroot Inspection.” Folder Bitterroot National Forest Inspection Reports, 1938-1935, 1 of 3, Box 2 Bitterroot – Cabinet, RG 95 Regional Office Inspection Reports 1906-1938, NARA, Seattle.

⁶ Evan Kelley to Bitterroot Forest Supervisor, G. M. Brandborg, September 29, 1937. Folder Bitterroot National Forest Inspection Reports, 1938-1935, 1 of 3, Box 2 Bitterroot – Cabinet, RG 95 Regional Office Inspection Reports 1906-1938, NARA, Seattle.

Medicine Point Lookout

Ravalli County, Montana

Name of Property

County and State

Fork District. It also had "... the best overall long-range detection point" on the district. The combined seen area of the two lookouts covered between 10 and 30 air miles including very deep canyons choked with heavy lodgepole pine downfall. In some areas, smoke would have to rise 3,000 feet before being detected by the lookouts stationed at Sula Peak and Medicine Point.⁷

Medicine Point continued to be staffed through the 1960s: In 1967, it was one of sixteen lookouts manned forest-wide. Others on the Sula District included Sula Peak, and McCart.⁸ By the mid 1970s, however, Medicine Point was downgraded to an emergency lookout—manned only during extreme fire seasons.

In 1998, the forest began restoring Medicine Point Lookout. Many Bitterroot Valley businesses contributed materials and volunteers conducted much of the work. The forest installed a bronze plaque on the southeast concrete footing, acknowledging the participants in the restoration. Following the completion of the restoration effort, Medicine Point Lookout was added to the forest's cabin rental program. The current outhouse is a modern building constructed according to a historic plan and cannot be counted as a contributing building.



Figure 1. Photograph of Medicine Point Lookout, soon after completion of its restoration in 1999
(Photo: National Historic Lookout Register)

⁷ Vern Hamre, DFR, by John W. Warren to Forest Supervisor, Tom Smith, February 18, 1954 Memorandum F-Fire Control Table X. Folder: F-Plans Bitterroot General CY 1953-1954, Box 20, BIT05, RG 95 Records of the Bitterroot National Forest, NARA Seattle.

⁸ List of Fire Lookouts (manned) in 1967. Folder: 5100 Lookouts Historical 2 of 2, Box 45, RG 95 Records of the Forest Service Region 1, Missoula, Montana Historical Collection 1903-1990, NARA Seattle.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Kresek, Ray
1984 *Fire Lookouts of the Northwest*. Fairfield Washington: Ye Galleon Press.

RG 95 Records of the US Forest Service, National Archives and Records Administration,
Seattle, Washington.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
 - ☐ Other State agency
 - ☒ Federal agency
 - ☐ Local government
 - ☐ University
 - ☒ Other
- Name of repository: National Archives & Records Administration, Seattle, WA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 24RA0134

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property roughly one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 45.806919

Longitude: -114.11019

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 11

Easting: 724539 Northing: 5076657

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of this property is an arbitrary line drawn to encompass the top of the rocky knob containing the lookout and associated resources, roughly corresponding to the contour interval.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encloses the primary improvement at this location, which include the lookout and its associated outhouse.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Janene Caywood

organization: CRCS

street & number: 1002 South 6th St. West

city or town: Missoula state: MT zip code: 59801

e-mail: crs@montana.com

telephone: 406 728-9190

date: December 14, 2017

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)



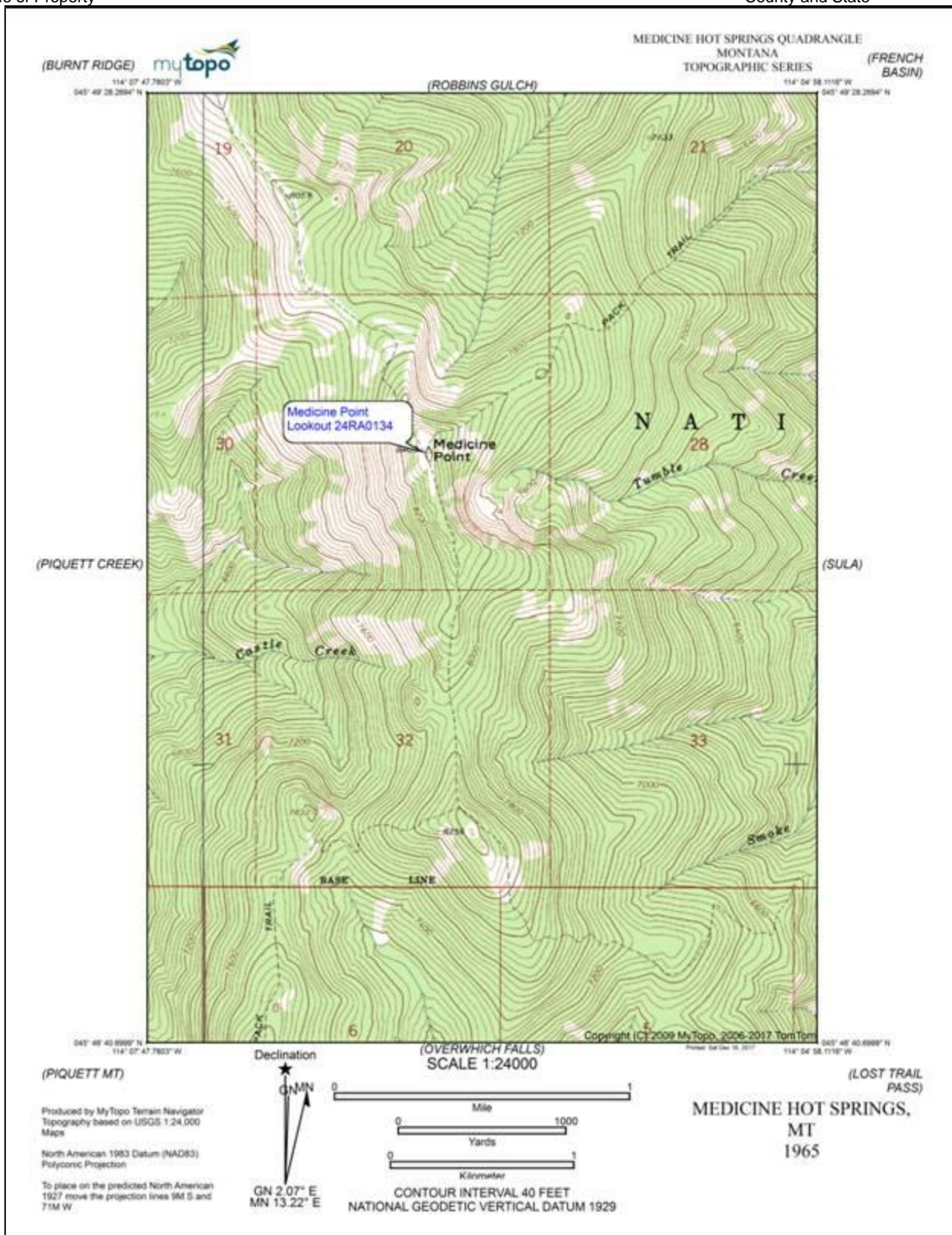
2016 Google Earth image showing the Medicine Point Lookout and associated improvements.

Medicine Point Lookout

Ravalli County, Montana

Name of Property

County and State



Medicine Point Lookout

Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana

County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600 x 1200 pixels (minimum), 3000 x 2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

All Photographs

Name of Property: Medicine Point Lookout

City or Vicinity: Vicinity of Darby, Montana

County: Ravalli

State: Montana

Photographer: Janene Caywood

Date Photographed: August 6, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ____.

See Below

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Medicine Point Lookout

Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana

County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0001. Looking east-east to the north and west walls of the lookout. The antenna pole is shown at the northeast corner of the lookout.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0002. Looking south-southwest to the east and north sides of the lookout.

Medicine Point Lookout

Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana

County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0003. Detail of the stone steps leading to the base of the stairway at the northeast end of the east wall.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0004. Detail: concrete footing at base of stair impressed with "SEPT 1939 ccc"

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0005. Detail of the battered concrete pier at the southeast corner of the look with commemorative plaque.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0006. Looking north along the catwalk on the west wall of the lookout cab.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0007. Looking east along the catwalk adjacent to the north wall of the lookout cab.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0008. Interior: original stand with Osborn fire finder. Note the maple flooring.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0009. Interior: platform bed with drawers underneath.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

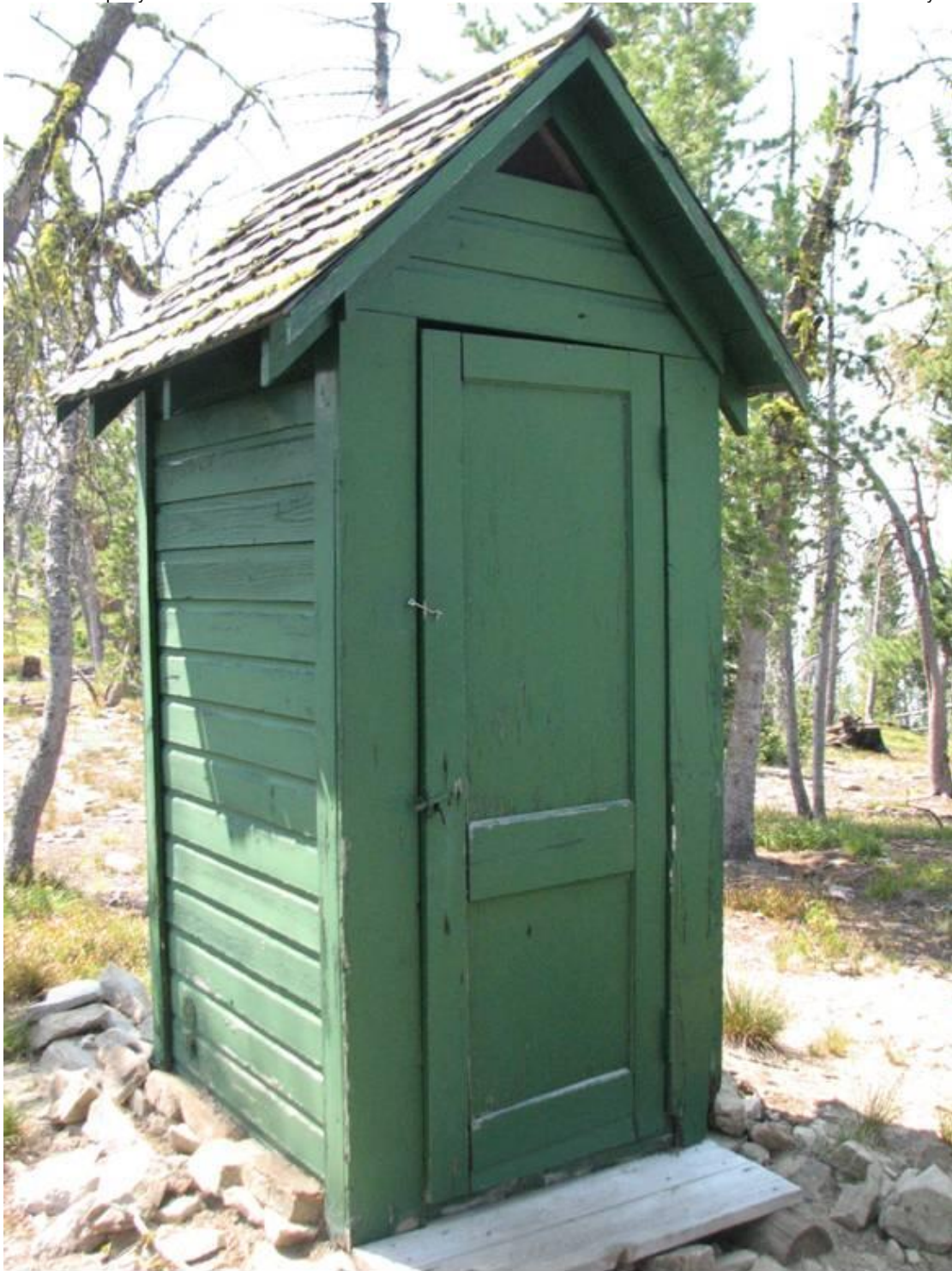
Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0010. Interior: wood heating stove, table, and wood cabinet.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0011. Looking southwest to the east and north walls of the outhouse.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0012. Looking northeast to the west and south walls of the outhouse.

Medicine Point Lookout
Name of Property

Ravalli County, Montana
County and State



MT_Ravalli_MedicinePointLookout_0013. Looking north to the metal hitching rail.